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Chairman: Mr. KHOUINI (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 72: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued) (A/47/20, A/47/383)

1. Mr. PLUMBLY (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community, said that it was becoming increasingly obvious how space could be used peacefully for the benefit of the planet. Space-based telecommunications, remote sensing and research were improving communication between nations and providing valuable data on environmental problems and the physics of micro-gravity.

2. The growth in the use of space for peaceful purposes was a welcome development in the wake of the cold war, when space technology was more often associated with warfare. In the framework of European space cooperation, closer relations were being sought with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, because much of the work carried out in space was often of a cooperative nature, the peaceful use of outer space augured well for closer cooperation on Earth.

3. The European Community and its member States recognized the importance of using space for peaceful purposes and appreciated the benefits flowing from such activities. The European Community was committed to playing its part in promoting international cooperation in the space field by establishing technical and scientific programmes and by encouraging multilateral, regional and bilateral space activities.

4. He commended the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and its Chairman for the role they played in establishing the legal framework of conventions and principles that had been crucial to achieving the goals of international cooperation and peaceful uses of outer space.

5. He hoped that the Committee would adopt the draft resolution (A/SPC/47/L.5) on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space by consensus, as in previous years.

6. He also commended the Legal and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittees of the Committee for their patient but persistent efforts in reaching consensus on the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The European Community fully appreciated the need for absolute clarity in stating the principles, and it recognized the complications attendant upon any negotiation concerning such a rapidly changing technology. As new nuclear power technology in space continued to develop, so should the principles. It would be necessary to revisit - and perhaps revise - the principles in the near future in order to ensure that they were in step with technological progress.

7. He supported the view of the General Assembly - and of many delegations to the Committee - that the topic of space debris should be added to the

(Mr. Plumbly, United Kingdom)

agenda of future meetings of COPUOS. However he also recognized that in order for such a discussion to be worthwhile and relevant, it should be based on sound research.

8. Another issue deserving urgent attention by COPUOS was the contribution that space science could make to solving environmental problems. The Committee was well-placed to play a role in implementing some of the recommendations arising from the recent United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. He welcomed States members of COPUOS to submit views on how the Committee could contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Conference. The European Community also wished that the use of space science in tackling the world's environmental problems would eventually be added to the agenda at future COPUOS meetings.

9. The work of European Community member States in the area of space science during 1992 demonstrated the interest of the Community in that subject. For example, there was an initiative set in train by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to improve dialogue among space agencies and environmental users and to increase the use of satellite data in national and international environmental programmes. As follow-up to that initiative, Germany was plannning a conference in November of 1992 to discuss the coordination of the requirements of satellite data users in Europe. The European Community strongly supported such coordination exercises in other regions of the world, especially among users of remote sensing in developing countries.

10. The Community and its member States were grateful for the United Nations initiative to establish - through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications regional centres for space science and technology education in existing educational research institutions. He also welcomed the fact that those centres had the potential to contribute significantly to the implementation of the recommendations of the Rio Conference. During 1992, the States members of the European Community had been enthusiastic participants in the International Space Year and had carried out a wide range of activities at both the national and multinational levels. Representatives from a number of European Community member States had organized workshops with the aim of communicating the importance of space technologies - especially to young people. The Twelve welcomed the recommendation in the report on the thirty-fifth session of COPUOS (A/47/20) that the United Nations should encourage the continuation of International Space Year activities beyond the end of 1992 and support the involvement of even more nations in the initiative.

11. He expressed the wish that the renewed optimism and spirit of cooperation evident in the Committee following the agreement on the principles on the use of nuclear power sources would be translated into programmes of action of benefit to all nations.

12. Mr. RYDBERG (Sweden) said that space research and applications had a significant role to play in helping humanity to achieve sustainable development of the material and human potential of the planet and that the use of space technology for environmental protection could be of particular utility in that regard. It was therefore not coincidental that International Space Year 1992 should coincide with the holding of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The activities carried out during International Space Year could facilitate the realization of the goals set and the agreements concluded at the Rio Conference. That applied in general to the monitoring of important aspects of the global environment. As part of Sweden's contribution to International Space Year, eight research projects had been carried out representing a variety of remote sensing applications in the field of forestry planning and management. The research covered forests in Sweden, Africa and Asia. As an expression of its support for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, Sweden had also offered a five-week course in remote sensing techniques for university teachers in countries in Africa, South-East Asia and South America. International Space Year had also seen the launching of Sweden's second scientific satellite. The craft was designed to carry instruments for research into the aurora and to investigate other magnetospheric/ionospheric phenomena.

13. In 1992, the Special Political Committee had the particularly gratifying task of reviewing the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space (A/47/20, annex). His delegation wished to thank the Chairman of COPUOS for the skilful way in which he had conducted the final stage of negotiations and looked forward to the adoption of the principles by the General Assembly. The principles identified techniques and procedures to minimize the quantity of radioactive material in space, and provided for a series of actions to be taken both before and after launch to minimize the risk of accidents and to mitigate their consequences. His delegation supported the idea of amending the principles if and when developments in space technology required such modifications.

14. His Government believed that the question of the outer space environment, particularly the problem of space debris, should be inscribed on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS. The efforts taken by COPUOS and its Subcommittees to streamline their working methods had resulted in progress. Such efforts formed part of the overall effort to ensure that the Committee remained an effective and able instrument for responding to growing challenges in a changing global environment.

15. Mr. CHIARADIA (Argentina), speaking also on behalf of the members of the Rio Group, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, said that 1992 had been a particularly productive year for COPUOS, which had adopted a set of principles on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. Those principles constituted an important step forward in preventing accidents involving radioactive debris, and it was to be hoped that the General Assembly would adopt them. They also

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

constituted a further step in the progressive development of a legal structure regulating space activities. Throughout its existence, COPUOS had been one of the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly which had contributed most to international law, and the countries for which he spoke were committed to encouraging and reinforcing its work.

16. One of the noteworthy events held within the framework of International Space Year had been the Space Conference for the Americas organized by the Government of Chile. That Conference had provided an opportunity to discuss specific and practical methods of international and regional cooperation in such areas as natural resource detection, the study of space law and the use of remote television for educational purposes.

17. It was disappointing that most of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 had not yet been implemented. The Rio Group supported in principle the idea of a third United Nations conference, inter alia, to evaluate the results of UNISPACE 82 and considered that it would be desirable for such a conference to be held in a developing country. In that context, he noted that the Outer Space Division was continuing its work towards establishing a United Nations regional centre for education in space science and technology in the Latin American region. The number of countries which had shown interest in becoming the host of such a centre was an indication of the interest the idea aroused in the region.

18. The Office for Outer Space Affairs and the United Nations Programme on Space Applications continued to work with effectiveness and enthusiasm in spite of the limitations of their resources. The Rio Group supported the proposal made by the Group of 77 to provide them with greater resources so that they could continue to work for the benefit of the international community and especially the developing countries.

19. The Legal Subcommittee had also worked intensively during 1992, and was to be congratulated on its success in reaching agreement on a set of principles for the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space. The Working Group involved was also to be congratulated on its success and the Rio Group would continue to participate actively in the future work of reviewing, implementing and strengthening those principles.

20. The Working Group on the definition and delimitation of outer space had carried out an interesting discussion on the basis of a working document submitted by the Russian Federation (A/AC.105/514, annex IV, sect. 13) on the future use of aerospace objects which, it was to be hoped, would make possible further progress on that basic aspect of space law.

21. The Working Group on the geostationary orbit had discussed a document submitted by some members of the Group of 77. The Rio Group considered that document constructive and deserving of detailed analysis for the purpose of overcoming the obstacles which had impeded adequate treatment of that subject.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

22. A substantive debate on the legal principles relating to the principle of the use of outer space for the benefit of all States, taking into special account the needs of the developing countries, had been carried out in the relevant Working Group on the basis of working paper A/AC.105/C.2/L.182. A revised version of that document would be submitted by its sponsors in the light of the proposals and comments made in connection with it.

23. In 1992, COPUOS had again examined the subject of the means for the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes. In that context, the Rio Group called on all Governments to comply strictly with article IV of the Outer Space Treaty as well as a greater exchange of information between the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and COPUOS.

24. It was to be hoped that the General Assembly would shortly approve the set of principles on the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space, and thus make room in the agenda of COPUOS for other questions, such as that of the preservation of the environment in outer space. Such preservation would ensure the future use of outer space for all and protect the environment and security of the planet. A discussion of the question might usefully be begun at the Committee's next session.

25. Mr. YELCHENKO (Ukraine) said that since its independence, Ukraine had sought to broaden its participation in all spheres of international cooperation including the field of space exploration.

26. He commended COPUOS for its work in establishing a system of principles for the exploitation of space for the benefit of all countries. Although the problems concerning the international use of space were becoming increasingly complex, the long-standing tradition of fruitful cooperation and the spirit of compromise preserved in COPUOS would make it possible to find acceptable solutions.

27. The last session of COPUOS had restored the confidence of everyone that it had a true role to play in promoting international cooperation in exploring outer space. That confidence could be enhanced still further by identifying specific promising areas of international cooperation and by reaching agreement on a particular form of cooperation in each area. One priority for such cooperation could be the protection and preservation of space itself. In the part of its work touching on that question the Committee had been guided by relevant decisions at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, and had benefited from the able guidance of Mr. Peter Hohenfellner, the distinguished chairman of COPUOS, who had helped to achieve a consensus on the question of nuclear power sources.

28. He stressed the importance of the Committee's recommendation to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to adopt the principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space (A/47/20, annex), and said that although nuclear power sources represented a step forward in the

(Mr. Yelchenko, Ukraine)

exploration and utilization of outer space, they also carried some potential danger. As a result of the Chernobyl disaster, Ukraine was especially sensitive to the need for a reasonable balance between nuclear and other sources of energy for spacecraft, but remained ready for close international cooperation in efforts to reduce to a minimum the possibility of accidents in on-board nuclear power sources. The definition and delimitation of outer space was another important problem. His Government believed that outer space should be legally delimited and open to free exploration and utilization by all countries. Regarding the problem of the use of the geostationary orbit, he believed that there was only one possible solution, i.e., to get more use out of spacecraft in the geostationary orbit in the interest of the entire international community. Work along those lines in COPUOS should be commended and continued.

29. The exploration and use of space by Ukraine was one of his Government's priorities, as was demonstrated by the establishment by presidental decree of a national space agency. Despite the difficulties of economic transition, Ukraine maintained a well-developed scientific and technological base and a modern space industry. Its scientific and technological facilities had been integrated into the powerful space infrastructure of the former Soviet Union, producing strategic rockets, rocket launchers, spacecraft and related systems, as well as basic research equipment. Ukraine envisioned close international cooperation in the field of exploration and use of outer space. The first step in such cooperation would be Ukraine's admission to the international organizations dealing with space activities, particularly the European Space Agency and INTELSAT. Ukraine also intended to strengthen its ties with other recently independent States, and had ratified a number of relevant agreements within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Minsk and Tashkent. The main elements of the Ukrainian space programme would include basic scientific research, monitoring of natural resources and national security activities.

30. Ukraine was firmly opposed to the militarization of outer space; it viewed its security as being integrally linked to the security of the world as a whole. In that spirit, the Ukrainian space programme had made provision for the conversion of the rocket and space industry to peaceful uses, but that was an extremely complex and costly undertaking in practice. Nevertheless, Ukraine intended to adhere to that policy and was prepared to engage in broad-based international cooperation to implement it. His Government had already made a number of practical proposals concerning the commercial use of facilities for the launching of strategic missles and systems for monitoring and forecasting seismic activity on earth by means of remote sensing.

31. Mr. MATEEM-UR-REHMAN (Pakistan) said that the agreement reached by COPUOS on a set of principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space constituted a major achievement, which his delegation was confident would receive the unanimous support of the General Assembly. It was to be hoped that the Committee's future deliberations would also be characterized by

(Mr. Mateem-Ur-Rehman, Pakistan)

such fruitful cooperation, in particular, on the priority item entitled "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". The increased militarization of outer space was a matter of serious concern and a complete halt in all militarized activities was the only way to stop an arms race there. His delegation had always supported the position that it was within the Committee's competence to discuss that matter, especially in view of the fact that military activities in space would seriously damage the efforts towards international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

32. His delegation also shared the view that there was a need to promote international cooperation for the exclusive use of outer space for peaceful purposes, taking into particular account the needs of the developing countries. The idea of holding international and regional programmes as part of such international efforts as International Space Year was extremely useful.

33. The reorientation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in accordance with the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 had helped it to provide, particularly to the developing countries, information on space technology and applications in general and remote-sensing applications in particular, through the organization of training programmes, workshops and seminars. In that regard, the efforts made by the United Nations Expert on Space Applications were laudable.

34. His country believed that the spread of scientific and technological expertise through international cooperative activities, including the holding of seminars, symposiums, training courses and meetings of experts, would strengthen international cooperation and that consideration should be given to measures for further strengthening of the Programme on Space Applications and other related activities within the United Nations system. It favoured greater coordination of the programmes of space technology applications being implemented by the various United Nations agencies, and shared the concern expressed with regard to the lack of adequate financial resources for the Programme and related activities.

35. Pakistan supported the Committee's recommendation that further discussions should be held on the possibility of holding a third United Nations space conference. Such an event would provide an impetus to further expand international cooperation in that field, in particular, through greater involvement of the developing countries.

36. The Principles relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space had been adopted as long ago as 1986 but would remain devoid of any regulatory aspects unless they were given legal force. An effort should therefore be made to formulate specific recommendations to translate those Principles into some form of international agreement.

(Mr. Mateem-Ur-Rehman, Pakistan)

37. His delegation shared the concern expressed with regard to the over-commercialization of remote-sensing activities. The pricing of remote-sensing data products and access fees for data reception should, in particular, take into account the ability of the developing countries to pay, as otherwise the benefits from such technology would remain beyond their reach. Noting the lack of progress with respect to the item on the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, as well as the legal aspects of the exploration and utilization of outer space for the benefit and in the interest of all States, he expressed the hope that the same spirit of cooperation that had characterized the discussions on the principles of nuclear power sources would be reflected in future deliberations of COPUOS on those items.

38. On the issue of space and the environment, his delegation considered that greater attention must be paid to the serious problem of space debris and the possibility of collision of space objects with space debris. He endorsed the view that the subject should be included in the agenda of COPUOS or its Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees beginning with the next session.

39. Mr. BHAGAT (India) said that the benefits accruing from the exploration of outer space could not reach all humankind if utilization of outer space was not maintained exclusively for peaceful purposes. India was strongly committed to the peaceful uses of outer space, and its space programme had placed emphasis on developing indigenous capabilities, with appropriate international cooperation, and utilizing space technology in areas relevant to the country's rapid development.

40. The momentum generated by the activities during International Space Year of 1992, in which emphasis had been placed on harnessing the increased use of space technology to solve global problems, must be maintained, indeed enhanced, in order to ensure the widest spread of benefits to all nations.

41. In that context, it was a source of great satisfaction to India that the Indian Space Programme had made significant advances, including the commencement of operations of the Indian-built IRS-1B satellite launched on 29 August 1991, which had been assisting users in the management of renewable natural resources in such fields as forestry, land use, agriculture, water resources and sustainable development of resources at the village level. In order to promote international cooperation, the Indian Government had adopted a policy of making available data from IRS satellites to other interested countries. Another major achievement of the Indian Space Programme during the International Space Year had been the launch of INSAT-2A on 9 July 1992. That satellite, the first of the second generation series of multi-purpose satellites built in India for deployment in the geostationary orbit, was the first geostationary satellite to carry equipment to provide an alert for search and rescue operations, complementing the already available international COSPAS-SARSAT system which was based on low Earth orbit. There

(Mr. Bhagat, India)

had also been a successful launching of the third developmental flight of the Indian Launch Vehicle ASLV-D3 on 20 May 1992, which had placed in orbit a 106 kg satellite carrying scientific equipment to study the equatorial ionosphere and thermosphere and to study celestial gamma ray bursts and their temporal variations.

42. In the context of International Space Year, India had also undertaken several important studies in space sciences relating to such subjects as the monsoon, migration of climatic zones, and other subjects relevant to the international community's major concerns with respect to understanding global change phenomena.

43. It was appropriate that as part of the celebration of International Space Year, COPUOS had convened a special meeting at the beginning of the session to consider new approaches to international cooperation. Some of the recommendations which had emerged from the meeting were worthy of the Assembly's attention in guiding the future work of the Committee, in particular the recommendation concerning the discussion of the holding of a third United Nations conference on outer space. Such a conference, in India's view, would consolidate the momentum provided by International Space Year and could develop follow-up actions and mechanisms to further broaden the scope of international cooperation. It should also be aimed at promoting increased participation by the developing countries in space activities.

44. During the past year COPUOS had also actively reviewed the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, reaching the conclusion that several recommendations had not yet been fully implemented and should be taken up for further implementation on an urgent basis. His delegation would particularly stress the need to stimulate the growth of indigenous nuclei and an autonomous technology base in space technology in developing countries. In that connection, it again recalled the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 that there should be free exchange of scientific and technological information and arrangements for transfer of technologies to promote use and development of space technology in the developing countries. Appropriate international understandings should be developed urgently on that matter in order to assist developing countries. His delegation also endorsed the efforts of the Committee to establish regional centres for space science and technology education in developing countries to promote the development of indigenous capability.

45. The consensus reached on the principles governing the use of nuclear power sources in outer space represented an important milestone in the progress of the Committee's work. It was also important to achieve further progress on that agenda item in the Legal Subcommittee on the basis of the working paper put forward by several developing countries (A/AC.105/C.2/L.182).

46. His delegation had consistently emphasized the urgent need to maintain the integrity of the outer space environment and shared the concerns of those

(Mr. Bhagat, India)

who felt that increasing debris in outer space, particularly in certain bands, represented a potential danger to future activities in space. It was therefore important that the international community should study ways in which international cooperation could be organized to track and monitor debris, to take measures to regulate its growth and minimize the risk of its collision with space objects or humans operating in space. There was a need for the immediate inclusion of the subject of space debris in the agenda of the Outer Space Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

47. Mr. GALBADRAKH (Mongolia) said that, under the impetus of the observances connected with International Space Year, the international community had done much to promote the peaceful uses of outer space, particularly through greater cooperation and exchange of ideas in the field, the application of space technologies to economic and social problems, and environmental and climate monitoring. Mongolia's National Space Year Programme had focused on environmental monitoring and had sponsored studies on early-warning systems for national disasters and on natural resource assessment. The general public had been kept informed of International Space Year activities nationally and internationally, and institutions of higher learning had been involved in space application efforts. Also, in early October, the thirteenth Asian Conference on Remote Sensing had been held in Ulaanbaatar and, for the more than 20 countries attending, had been an excellent source of information on the applications of remote sensing to mining, land use, pasture distribution and forestry.

48. Mongolia welcomed the conclusion by COPUOS of its work on the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, a major achievement. It agreed that the issue of space debris should be assigned to its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for further study, and that the very valuable United Nations Programme on Space Applications, which ought to be adequately funded, should each year consider taking up the topic of spin-off benefits of space technology.

49. The tenth anniversary of UNISPACE 82 was a fitting occasion for an overall assessment of the implementation of its recommendations and for identification of priorities that needed attention.

50. Ms. DAPUL (Philippines) said that the endorsement by the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), of a set of principles intended to ensure the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space ranked among the most vital achievements in international cooperation in outer space. The use of those sources should be based on a thorough safety assessment, with particular emphasis on reducing the risk of accidental exposure of the public to harmful radiation. The hazards to man and the environment of unplanned re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere of malfunctioning space objects with nuclear power sources on board were obvious. Her delegation felt that those principles should be embodied in a legal instrument enforceable under international law.

(Ms. Dapul, Philippines)

51. The Philippines, which had supported the discussion of the problem of space debris in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, was baffled by the delay in inscribing the question in the agendas of the two Subcommittees of COPUOS. The liability and responsibility for space debris should be identified early in view of the risk to the space environment and consequently the Earth's environment. The need for further research on the subject should not be used as an excuse for ignoring the problem.

52. The question of space debris demonstrated the need for the development of space law. The Philippines attached importance to the legal aspects of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should benefit all States, including those with no space capabilities, with particular account being taken of the needs of developing countries. The development of a legal framework to govern cooperation in the use of outer space was imperative. Her delegation hoped that substantive work on that subject would commence soon in a duly constituted working group.

53. The Philippines relied heavily on remote sensing data in mapping resources, studying the environment and coping with natural disasters, and was thus concerned over the growing commercialization of remote sensing activities. Remote sensing products and access fees should be made affordable to countries with economic difficulties such as the Philippines. Her delegation thus advocated regular meetings between satellite operators, ground stations and users to discuss those issues and the need to ensure the continuity, compatibility and complementarity of remote sensing systems. Such cooperation was essential for optimizing the use of space technology for sustainable development.

54. Her delegation had requested COPUOS to accord top priority to international cooperation in space for the benefit of developing countries. It had noted an increase in such cooperation among space-faring countries, but deplored the paucity of cooperation between space-faring and non-space-faring nations outside the programmes sponsored by the United Nations.

55. The use of outer space had done little to reduce the gap between the developed and the developing countries. Programmes must be designed for the needs of the developing, not the developed, countries.

56. The success of International Space Year would depend on the development of mechanisms for continuing and extending cooperation. The Philippines called attention to the lack of financing to implement the UNISPACE 82 recommendations and the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and urged space-faring nations to contribute to that programme. Such a contribution would be a long-term investment, since developing countries were both potential and current users of space technology applications. Space technology had demonstrated its power to unite mankind, and it was only through cooperation in protecting and preserving our planet that we could ensure our own survival.

57. Mr. TELLES RIBEIRO (Brazil) said that his delegation fully endorsed the views expressed by the delegation of Argentina on its behalf. It wished to make some additional remarks on issues of particular interest to it.

58. Within the context of International Space Year, Brazil had hosted the World Forest Watch Conference on Remote Sensing Monitoring, sponsored by the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research and the Joint Research Centre, in addition to hosting the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It was essential to find ways in which the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space might help to implement the decisions taken at Rio de Janeiro.

59. Though there had been a reduction of tension as a result of a slowdown in the arms race, the new international climate had not yet brought enhanced international cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space. As outer space activities encompassed all branches of knowledge, they were highly suited to joint endeavours. One should therefore seek to combine indigenous efforts and external cooperation in the most productive way.

60. The prevention of the arms race in outer space was inseparable from the maintenance of outer space for peaceful purposes. His delegation felt that COPUOS should complement the work under way in bilateral and multilateral forums with a view to preventing an extension of the arms race into outer space and should be informed on the progress of the discussions held within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. It could also enhance the work of the Conference in areas such as transparency and confidence-building measures.

61. It was the understanding of his delegation that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, being an intergovernmental forum, should confer priority to policies and guidelines for international cooperation in space activities and be able to provide agreed technical parameters for the development of international space law. His country, despite severe financial constraints, had participated in the programme of long-term fellowships for 1992-1993, and urged Member States to contribute to the funding of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

62. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the visit of an evaluation mission sent to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico for the establishment of a centre for space science and technology education in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also supported the suggestion that a third UNISPACE conference should be held and noted with appreciation that the thirty-fifth session of COPUOS had welcomed the Chilean initiative to host a space conference to be held in January 1993.

63. Mr. FUJITA (Brazil) said that his delegation wished to express its satisfaction concerning the completion by the thirty-fifth session of COPUOS of a set of Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. The resulting document was the fruit of more than 12 years of hard

(Mr. Fujita, Brazil)

work and constituted an important contribution to the development of international space law. It was a compromise text reflecting a delicate balance of expectations and frustrations, but the international community as a whole would be the final beneficiary.

64. The text agreed on at the thirty-fifth session of COPUOS was the result of negotiations held at the thirty-first session of the Legal Subcommittee, in Geneva. His delegation had noted that some of the versions of the report of COPUOS (A/47/20), published in the different official languages of the Organization, contained passages that diverged somewhat from the purport of the original non-papers, which were all in English. It was the view of his delegation that, in respect of principle 4, Safety Assessment, to which Brazil attached great importance, the English version was authentic, reflecting the understandings reached.

65. At the thirtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee (1991) a number of delegations had submitted a working paper on "Principles regarding international cooperation in the exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes" (A/AC.105/C.2/L.182). The main objectives were to promote transparency, predictability, equity, effectiveness and mutual benefits in international cooperation in outer space, which would facilitate the dissemination of space benefits and the flow of space technologies and foster indigenous space capabilities. The main thrust of principle I was that States with space capabilities should promote cooperation in outer space science and technology with countries less advanced in those fields. Principle II, in referring to special treatment for developing countries, was not intended to limit the freedom of States to enter into bilateral or regional cooperation arrangements, but rather to supplement such arrangements on a wider level. The idea of access on a "timely basis" did not mean that States must grant to other States any and all knowledge derived from space activities, but rather referred to adequate access compatible with the recipient country's capability to absorb space technologies and applications. The words "equitable, non-discriminatory and timely basis" could be traced back to the 1986 Principles relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space and were relevant to the current exercise. The notion of "special treatment" to be granted to developing countries should not give rise to misinterpretation, and concepts such as "no reciprocity" simply reflected the difficulties experienced by developing countries in paying on the same basis as the more advanced countries, not necessarily implying the compulsory granting of cooperation on concessional terms. Concerning principle III it should be borne in mind that the transactions referred to must be freely agreed to by the parties.

66. His delegation, together with the other sponsors of the document, was undertaking a careful review of its wording in the light of suggestions received during the thirty-first session of the Legal Subcommittee and intended to present in the near future a new version that would take into account the views of the broadest possible universe of parties concerned.

67. Mr. SEARLE (Chile) observed that the widespread use of satellite technology had at a certain level already fostered global interdependence and that its proper use could promote the economic and social development of the peoples of the world. The exact, reliable information provided by satellite as events were taking place should not only prompt countries to give immediate assistance in humanitarian and other crises, but also inspire more effective preventive diplomacy. Even nations that were passive beneficiaries of space technology had to band together and share the cost of acquiring satellite technology of their own, since that would give them a stronger negotiating position vis-à-vis the small club of industrial countries currently controlling the technology.

68. Nations should be helped through international cooperation to acquire more accurate information about their own natural resources by means of remote sensing, without, however, relinquishing their sovereign right over their resources. Specific legal regulation of that and other areas of space activities was needed, and hence the importance of having the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS consider the item on the use of space for the benefit of all. Preliminary discussion in its Working Group, chaired by Chile, had indicated a widespread readiness to expand cooperation and transfer of technology on equitable and environmentally protective bases, and a common desire to establish a legal framework that would provide balanced access by all nations to the benefits of space technology.

69. The second Space Conference of the Americas to be held in 1993 in Chile would undoubtedly spawn projects crucial to the economic and social development of the countries involved and ensure their participation in contemporary technology. Chile was sympathetic to the proposal to convene a third UNISPACE conference in 1995 in a developing country, because regular updating was required given the rapid developments in space technology, as was a progressive development of space law to keep pace with them. Improved satellite telecommunications in the service of the environment should be a priority issue for discussion. At the same time there was the moral imperative to see to it that, as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had urged, the least developed countries as well benefited from scientific advances.

70. The question of the geostationary orbit concerned his Government, because it was no secret that whoever controlled the orbit could come to control global telecommunications, with a pernicious and destabilizing impact on national identities and on multiracialism. Technical regulation by the International Telecommunication Union was not sufficient: an approach addressing the political aspects was in order. His delegation still believed that the background paper (A/AC.105/C.2/L.187) submitted by Chile at the thirty-first session of the Legal Subcommittee offered a good basis for consensus on the matter, although some delegations seemed for the moment to have no real intention of cooperating.

(Mr. Searle, Chile)

71. On the subject of developing space law governing the prevention of the militarization of space, certain States had, again, for political reasons been blocking any progress by COPUOS, maintaining that it was a matter for discussion rather by the Conference on Disarmament. Yet COPUOS could bring experience and technical expertise to the question. Chile therefore proposed the possible establishment of an inter-institutional mechanism or a group of experts to promote research and greater openness in space activities, in order to ensure the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Such peaceful purposes did not, of course, preclude certain military functions such as those performed by satellites verifying compliance with disarmament treaties or monitoring border crises.

72. International security had six interrelated aspects: the military, the political, the economic, the scientific and technical, the socio-cultural and the environmental; and the second Space Conference of the Americas would address all of them. Concerted action, preferably regional, was necessary if technology was to be applied to alleviating poverty, if communications education in far-flung areas was to be expanded, long-distance medical diagnoses provided, and pollution controlled. At the same time, a third UNISPACE conference could be the a focal point for future international cooperation on space activities and their applications.

73. Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) said that his Government was convinced of the need to expand and strengthen international cooperation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space and recognized its responsibility to fulfil the international obligations undertaken by the former Soviet Union concerning the peaceful use of outer space. Cooperation with the United Nations on space issues was a high priority in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation.

74. The effectiveness of the Organization in activities relating to outer space was due above all to the work of COPUOS which could take credit for a long list of achievements in elaborating international agreements, conducting research, organizing international conferences, and administering programmes on the practical application of space technologies. Of particular significance in that connection was the set of legal Principles concerning the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space (A/AC.105/513) which had been approved by COPUOS and had been taken up by the General Assembly at its current session.

75. The Russian Federation was striving in a variety of ways to strengthen the legal basis for cooperation among all Governments - including those of the former Soviet Union - in the study and exploration of outer space. His Government attached great importance to the agreement that it had signed, together with other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, on joint space activities. The signers of the agreement had undertaken to plan their activities in accordance with existing norms of international law and to coordinate efforts to find solutions for outstanding international legal

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

problems in the space field. Pursuant to an agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States, concrete plans were being implemented for a variety of space projects, including joint manned space flights, and a new mechanism was being instituted for evaluation at high levels of Government of the results of cooperation in the space field.

76. As a result of the development of international legal norms regarding outer space, and of the need for greater involvement of the United Nations in resolving questions of trust and predictability in outer space activities, his Government supported the intensification of COPUOS efforts to elaborate norms and principles regulating specific space activities. In that regard, he suggested that consideration be given to the legal aspects of the use of aerospace systems with the possible aim of regulating such systems under international law. The growing problem of space debris was also of great concern to his Government, and he supported the proposal for COPUOS and its Subcommittees to examine the legal aspects of space debris and to take whatever possible practical steps were needed to solve the problem. One area that the Committee could consider would be new rules governing manned space flights. In that connection, the Committee could use as a basis for its work the draft convention on manned space flights which had been worked out by non-governmental experts from the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Germany and other interested non-governmental organizations.

77. His Government supported the fullest possible expansion of cooperation between States Members of the United Nations in the implementation of programmes and cooperative projects in the area of outer space. Despite his Government's recent decision to re-evaluate the form and scope of its participation in some of those programmes, cooperation with the United Nations would continue to be a high priority of Russian space agencies. In that connection, he expressed his regret that the scope of his Government's participation in the activities planned for the next International Space Year had been reduced. However, his Government had issued a special decree establishing a youth programme in the Russian Federation that would encompass a variety of media events having to do with space and space exploration.

78. In order to redress the legacy of many years of secrecy regarding space activities in the former Soviet Union, the Russian Federation had created its first civilian agency to oversee Government policy on the exploration and use of outer space. The agency would manage procurement of space systems and materials for industrial and military use, coordinate commercial space projects, and work cooperatively with corresponding agencies in the Governments of the other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on joint space activities and development of Earth-based space facilities. The new agency would also be responsible for formulating the Government's space programme, its draft proposals being subject to independent analysis by experts.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze,
Russian Federation)

79. The enormous recent changes on the international scene had provided a real basis for further progress in international cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space. To further the goal of peaceful development of outer space, COPUOS should seek ways to coordinate its activities with those of the Conference on Disarmament.

80. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria), speaking as Chairman of the Working Group on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space of the Special Political Committee, introduced two draft resolutions pertaining to agenda item 72. The Working Group recommended that the Committee should adopt draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.5 on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.6 containing the agreed draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The latter draft resolution was the culmination of more than a decade's work and its adoption would be tangible testimony to the spirit of compromise reigning in COPUOS.

81. The Working Group had also agreed that the Chairman of the Special Political Committee should draw the Fifth Committee's attention to the request in paragraph 29 of the report of COPUOS that the General Assembly should make an adequate allocation for the Programme on Space Applications in order to fully implement the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.